



THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Cleveland Museum of Art Presents Free Fencing Demonstration

CLEVELAND (Nov. 4, 2004) — The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) presents a fencing demonstration and visual presentation with Sara Kass of Cyrano's Place, Lakewood, Ohio in conjunction with the Rocky River High School Fencing Club, Rocky River, Ohio. This event will be held on **Sunday, Nov. 14, 2 to 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 to 4 p.m. in Gartner Auditorium.**

Admission to the Museum and this event is free.

Local families and groups are invited to watch this demonstration and visual presentation. The group, comprising of approximately six students, will demonstrate the three Olympic weapons of fencing: the foil, épée and saber. The foil, a direct descendant of the court sword or short sword used by gentleman, has a circular guard and a thin, flexible, four-sided blade. The foil is very light and manageable, so that duelers can practice their craft with precision. The épée, a direct descendant of the rapier is heavier than the foil and is used for dueling. It has a long, narrow, multi-angular, fluted blade and a large, cup-shaped guard that protects the hand and forearm. The saber has a broad, heavy blade originally used as a Calvary sword and is a descendant of the Calvary saber, unlike its predecessor, has a thin lightweight blade. Early sabers have a heavy, curved blade, but over the centuries the sword evolved into a much lighter, thinner and perfectly strait blade.

Sword fighting as a sport has existed since ancient Egypt and has been practiced in many forms and various cultures. It's regarded as more than a sport and is considered an art form to its students and masters. The earliest evidence of fencing dates back to 1200 BC in Egypt. Later, Greek and Roman civilizations taught fencing in schools, favoring short, lightweight swords and spears. The 15th century marks the beginning of modern fencing, when the first fencing manuals were published in Spain. During this time, swordplay guilds were established throughout Europe and the popularity of fencing drastically increased. Fencing was introduced to America in the 1860s and 1870s by immigrant French and Italian fencing masters and by this time, was considered a non-violent sport. Fencing became one of the original sports hosted at the 1896 Modern Olympic Games in Greece.

Cyrano's Place offers classes in foil, épée and saber to ages five and over. Kass is the head coach of Cyrano's Place and has been involved in fencing for almost 30 years. She has been a finalist in the U.S. National Championship for Women's Saber and was a three-time Most Valuable Player and team captain of Hunter College's fencing team. For more information on Cyrano's Place, please call (216) 227-3835 or visit www.CyranosPlace.com.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The Museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the Museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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